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# GRENADA

TWO ESSAYS BY  
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AN EXAMINATION OF THE U.S. INVASION OF GRENADA  
UNDERSTANDING THE GRENADA REVOLUTION



# AN EXAMINATION OF THE U.S. INVASION OF GRENADA

On October 23, 1983, in a lecture entitled *Grenada and the Revolutionary Process*, which I delivered at Cornell University, I argued that the day on which Sir Maurice Bishop, the former Prime

*BUT what do we mean by the American Revolution? Do we mean the American War? The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments, of their duties and obligations. . . . This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people was the real American Revolution.*

*John Adams to Hezekiah, 1818*

It is one thing for U.S. imperialism to continue its policy of invading the Caribbean; it is quite another thing for these Caribbean politicians to invite the U.S. in to do the same thing."

It is important to understand that the U.S. has always interfered in the affairs of the Caribbean. From 15 March 1803 when the United States intervened in the affairs of the Nicaraguan people to the present time, the United States has intervened directly in the affairs of the Caribbean no less than 23 times.



*When the revolution speaks, it must be heard, listened to. Whatever the revolution decrees, it must be obeyed; when the revolution commands, it must be carried out; when the revolution talks, no parasite must bark in their corner. The voice of the masses must be listened to, their rules must be obeyed, their ideas must receive priority, their needs must be addressed; when the masses speak, they must be heard. When the revolution orders, it must be obeyed. The revolution must be respected.*

*Maurice Bishop,*

## AN EXAMINATION OF THE U.S. INVASION OF GRENADA

On October 23 1983, in a lecture entitled: *Grenada and the Revolutionary Process*, which I delivered at Cornell University, I argued that the day on which Mr. Maurice Bishop, the former Prime Minister of Grenada, was killed was a very sad day for the people of Grenada and all of the progressive forces in the Caribbean and in all other parts of the world.

The next morning, the United States and some of her Caribbean allies invaded Grenada.

At a lecture at William and Hobart Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York which I delivered two days later, I made the following statement: "As I speak to you today against the background of the United States invasion of Grenada, I think that 25 October 1983 will go down as a day of infamy for those Caribbean leaders who "invited" and have supported the invasion of the United States into our territories.

Nothing can mitigate this perfidious act which this small bunch of reactionary leaders have perpetrated against the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada.

It is one thing for U.S. imperialism to continue its policy of invading the Caribbean; it is quite another thing for these Caribbean politicians to invite the U.S. in to do the same thing."

It is important to understand that the U.S. has always interfered in the affairs of the Caribbean. From 11 March 1833 when the United States intervened in the affairs of the Nicaraguan people to the present time, the United States has interfered directly in the affairs of the Caribbean no less than 53 times.



In the twentieth century, the United States occupied Cuba in 1895-1902 and 1906-1909; Nicaragua (1912-1933); Haiti in 1915-1934; the Dominican Republic (1916-1924) and in 1965; sponsored the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961; and now it has invaded Grenada in 1983.

And, as is customary, the US has always entered the Caribbean either to stop the spread of communism or to protect US citizens or its property.

### STRATEGIC INTEREST

But it would be foolhardy if we only saw the adventure in strickly militaristic terms. The Caribbean has always been important for the US in terms of economic and strategic interests. Writing in 1935, U.S. Major-General Smedley D. Butler, one of America's most decorated heroes, wrote; "I spent 33 years and 4 months in active service as a members of our country's most agile military force- the Marine Corps. And during that period I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street, and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism.

Thus I helped make Haiti and Cuba decent places for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for America Sugar interest in 1916. I helped make Honduras "right" for American fruit companies in 1903.

Looking back on it, I feel I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three cities districts. We Marines operated on three continents." (*Cudjoe*, 37).

And so the U.S. continues her adventurism in the three continents of the globe.

In March 1981, Orlando Patterson and I participated in a debate on the rise of socialism in the Caribbean at Harvard University. My contribution is contained in my book, *Movement of the People*. I

pointed out in that debate that even at that point the United States was contemplating interfferring in the affairs of the Caribbean once more and referred to a rather crude editorial which appeared in the *Richmond Times Dispatch* to support my position.

According to that editorial, the Caribbean threat to the national security of the United States lay primarily in the attempt by "Cuban dictator Fidel Castro to bring more of the islands under his sphere of influence, (and this) may lead to changes in administration aid policy."

The editorial continued: "Our change would entail U.S. assistance to enable the police forces of the English-speaking republics to cope with subversive elements. No area is more crucial to America's security. Three fourths of all U.S. oil imports transit the Caribbean.

Through these channels and the Panama Canal course the petroleum of the Middle East, Ecuador and Alaska. Additionally, the supertankers sailing from the Persian Gulf around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope transfer their cargoes into smaller seized vessels at Bahamas, Virgin Islands, Trinidad or Aruba-Curacao rather than docking directly in U.S. ports."

Complaning about the "alarming decline in US military power in this sensitive area and upsurge in Soviet-Cuban clout" the newspaper went on to quote a Heritage Foundation Study which concluded: "The Caribbean, once an American Lake, is becoming a Socialist Sea."

It is against this background that we ought to look at the recent intervention of the U.S. in the Caribbean. For even though it may be presented under another hue, the attempt to stop the progressive forces in the Caribbean from constructing the kind of societies which we see as desirable to solve our problems, lie very much behind the action of Mr. Reagan and his Caribbean puppets.

According to the *New York Times* of 30 October, even the statement to invade was prepared in Washington D.C. while the impetus for the invasion came from Mr. Tom Adams whose country



is not even a member of the Eastern Caribbean group that is purported to have given the US the authority to invade Grenada.

It only needs to be noted that the three principal Prime Ministers who supported the invasion (Tom Adams of Barbados, Eugenia Charles of Dominica and Edward Seaga of Jamaica) are among the most reactionary leaders of the British Caribbean. Neither Jamaica nor Barbados is a part of the Eastern Caribbean Union.

At the meeting of the Caribbean Community in Trinidad some days prior, the Caribbean Community had turned down all plans to invade Grenada.

At one level then, the principal question revolves around the U.S. flagrant violation of international law and all the norms of international decorum. The bully element is not to be discounted.

At another level, however, the issue of US invasion has to do with its attempt to eliminate all aspects of progressive transformation in the Caribbean and the struggle for socialist construction.

In its history, Grenada has been ruled by more colonial powers than any other territory in the Eastern Caribbean. As a former colonial territory, Grenada was trying to build and to concretize its independence. Since coming to power in 1979, the New Jewel Movement has made tremendous achievements.

From a negative economic growth rate in 1979, the Grenadian economy experienced a 5.5 per cent growth rate in 1982, according to The World Bank. This performance, be it noted, was better than the economic growth of any of the countries which participated in the invasion of Grenada. In fact, much better than any other country in the Eastern Caribbean.

But social construction is a difficult process. Some have even argued that it is not a picnic. The

United States, more than any other country, should know and understand this problem.

When, on 12 April 1776, thirteen English colonies in America decided that they wished to be "Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved," a great war for national liberation began.

In the process, thousands of lives were lost. Men understood that that was the price one paid for freedom. It was not, however, until eleven years later in 1787 that the first United States Constitution was framed and subsequently ratified by nine of the thirteen states in June 1789.

### FIRST FEDERAL ELECTIONS

The first federal elections were held in 1789 when George Washington became the first President of the United States. In that election, only ten of the thirteen states participated. The New York State legislature chose no electors and North Carolina and Rhode Island had not yet ratified the Constitution.

The United States was at war with Great Britain so no one could have demanded, even remotely, that it conduct an election in the first thirteen years of its existence. Indeed, as Wendell Phillips, that indomitable abolitionist and socialist suggested, if George Washington "had been caught before 1783, (he) would have died on the gibbet for breaking the laws of his sovereign."

Indeed, the vaunted Bill of Rights, were only passed in 1789 when the working people of the United States demanded that those rights be enshrined in the Constitution.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to believe that the American struggle was a great struggle because it involved white people predominantly.

In the 1860s the need arose to consolidate the



U.S. national struggle for independence. It was impossible to continue to create a homogeneous state while one half of the population was free while the other half was enslaved; while one half of the country was agrarian while the other half was industrialized; while one half was completely oblivious of the rights of the people of colour, while the other half was intent on maintaining that distinction if it didn't interfere with commerce and their profits.

Indeed, such were the times that the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, that revered body within the United States Constitution, could declare that "a black man had no rights which a white man was bound to respect." Such was the predominant wisdom of the age. Another struggle had to be fought to resolve the contradictions which inhered in the nature of the social development of the society.

One man with much foresight, and with the use of statistics, the new discipline of the age, argued in 1857 that there would be an "impending crisis" if those contradictions were not resolved. His name was Hinton Helper and his book was called *The Impending Crisis of the South*. The struggle was called the Civil War and hundreds of thousands of people were killed. A President who called upon the nation to bind its emotional, economic and spiritual wounds was killed quickly thereafter.

The process of national reconstruction had not yet ended. For it was only in the latter part of the 1860s that the Thirteenth (1865), Fourteenth (1868) and Fifteenth (1870) Amendments to the United States Constitution were passed; amendments which abolished slavery (the XIII), granted permanent citizenship to all (XIV) and the rights of all citizens, regardless of race, color or "previous condition of servitude." (XV)

But these were merely formal rights since the Asian people were placed into concentration camps

merely because they were thought to be sympathetic to Japan during World War II. Afro-American peoples, in their turn, were not permitted to participate fully in the political system until the Twenty Fifth Amendment was made to the U.S. Constitution in 1964.

In this process many innocent people were killed. Children were killed while they prayed in a Baptist Church in Alabama, others were killed as they drove to the South to assist in the process of national liberation while many were killed in the streets while they rose up to demand that this country live out its true destiny.

The process of national liberation, then, is a very stormy process. It involves, the transition from one state of constitutional government to another. The American revolution was faced with the same process.

In the early 1770s when there was much discussion about the inappropriateness of the English Constitution which guided the political destiny of the English colonies, one of the chief obstacles lay in the fact that the English constitution recognized three major political entities: royalty, nobility, and the commons.

Given the absence of any nobility and the tyranny of royalty what form was the new American Constitution to take? Indeed, Thomas Paine in his Pamphlet *Common Sense* had exposed the emptiness and self-contradiction of the English system. The system had to be overcome and something new had to be put in its place. Questions such as the nature of representation and the consent of the governed played important parts in the discussion of the development of a new social order. It resulted in the removal of royalty and nobility in the American Constitution even though there were those who thought that they could implant a 'hereditary nobility' in America. Revolutionary transformation demanded a complete overthrowing of the inherited English system of



governance.

The need, then, to construct another kind of social organisation, one that was/is consistent with the aspirations of the Grenadian people, was the principal issue when the NJM assumed power in 1979. This was the same problem which faced many other Caribbean territories when they gained formal independence in the 1960s. Could they continue with the same system of governance?

### COLONIAL NEGLECT

In 1974 Grenada became independent. Given the size of Grenada, it is important to understand what the revolutionary government under the leadership of both the late Maurice Bishop and Bernard Coard were trying to do. They were trying to construct a socialist democracy from a relatively weak and technologically backward base; to create a society where the people could enjoy the benefits of their labour; to construct a new society out of one which had suffered some of the worst colonial neglect.

The New Jewel Movement represented a new lease on life and signified the new direction in which the society would go.

To understand the present condition in Grenada we must go back to the early seventies when the New Jewel Movement was formed and a time when Grenada gained its independence from Britain.

The New Jewel Movement, a combination of Map (Movement for Assemblies of the People) and JEWEL (Joint Endeavour for Welfare, Education, and Liberation), was formed in 1973. Its leadership consisted of a large cadre of men and women who had come out of the Black Power Movement of the 1970s. The momentum of the movement was sown by the tremendous hostility which the Grenadian people felt towards the brutality of Eric Gairy and his notorious Mongoose Gang. The NJM (New Jewel

Movement), therefore, was formed in direct response to the one-man rule of Eric Gairy and his tremendous brutality against the population.

Two months after the NJM was founded, it brought together some 10,000 citizens for a People's Convention of Independence; that is, approximately one tenth of the entire population. Reminiscent of the early actions of Fidel Castro's struggle against the Batista regime, the NJM met on 4 November of that same year, convicted Gairy of 27 crimes and demanded that he resign within twenty one days.

For close to three weeks, the government of Eric Gairy was paralyzed, but the NJM did not know how to seize power, Gairy regained the upperhand and crushed the NJM with savage brutality.

In 1974, a new and revived New Jewel Movement was formed in which both Bernard Coard and Maurice Bishop were placed at the head. Some accounts argue that Coard was the person who was responsible for the reorganization of the NJM. Nonetheless, an important decision was taken at the formation of this new and revived movement. It was agreed that Coard would be the leader of the Party whereas Bishop would remain the public spokesman for the Movement; a position for which Bishop was suited adequately.

As the leader and spokesperson of the mock trial of Gairy, Bishop had won a certain amount of respect from the populace and his personal charisma made him the natural choice and spokesman for the budding revolution. Coard, meanwhile, had proclaimed his Marxist leanings as early as 1966, having returned from studying abroad.

Yet, the important provisions or guidelines of the NJM must be emphasized. In its Constitution, it was agreed that no one should be the leader for too long a period of time; that the leadership would rotate, that there would be a one-man, one-vote rule; and that the leadership would be guided at all times



by the Central Committee.

It is on this basis that the NJM came into being. It is to be noted that during the present crisis that Lt. Austin, the head of the Armed Forces, only had one vote on the Central Committee which ruled the island.

Political independence was granted in 1974 and the NJM attempted to work within the confines of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. In 1976, in alliance with the Grenada National Party and the United Peoples Party (two rather conservative parties), the NJM contested the elections and won six of the fifteen seats in Parliament.

In the process they captured forty eight percent of the votes. Mr Bishop became the leader of the Opposition and the NJM began to work more closely with the urban and rural workers of the country. In March 1979, Mr Gairy left for a visit to the United States and was overthrown by the NJM.

What then were the goals of the NJM? In its "Statement of Principles" the NJM lists ten central principles:

1. People's participation, people's politics, people's democracy.
2. People's cooperatives for the collective development of the people..
3. Health care based on need.
4. Full development of the People's talents, abilities and culture.
5. Full control as a people of our own natural resources.
6. Employment for all.
7. A decent standard of living for every family.
8. Freedom of expression and religion.
9. The liberation of Black and Oppressed people's throughout the world.
10. A united People. . . A New Society. . . A Just Society.

On 29 October 1979, Selwyn Strachan, a leader of the NJM, spoke about the evolution of the NJM. "The [NJM] started off as what we would call a revo-

lutionary party, a revolutionary democratic party.

We never called ourselves socialist at the beginning. The New Jewel Movement was engaged in revolutionary politics, attacking the system, trying to raise the political consciousness of the people, and - fundamentally- raising democratic issues amongst the masses trying to get them to struggle with us for democratic rights and freedoms. It started off on that basis.

As we got more and more mature, we were able to work out a clearer ideological position. It didn't come artificially, it was the result of struggle, in a concrete way. Over a period we were able to work out a firm and definitive ideological position". (*Forward Ever!*, p. 21)

In the course of its development, the revolution made tremendous achievements. As Maurice Bishop indicated two years ago, the revolution was able to mobilize the people for social and economic construction and it gave the people of Grenada a tremendous sense of pride in themselves.

In material terms, the amount of secondary and university school places increased tremendously and the amount of doctors serving the population increased.

At the level of infrastructural development, the construction of an international airport was conceived and planned as the means through which the economy was supposed to take off. In this respect most of the assistance for the construction of this airport came from the Eastern bloc countries generally and Cuba particularly. The United States, in its turn, went out of its way to prevent the members of the European Economic Community from assisting the Government of Grenada in this endeavour. In this respect, the charge was made constantly by the United States that the airport was being constructed for military purposes even though it was only the sixth largest airport in the Caribbean.



Plessy Airport, a British company which headed the construction team that was building the airport at the time that Grenada was invaded listed eleven facilities which were needed at a military airport. None of these existed in Grenada. Tony Devereux, a spokesman for Plessy, commented: "There's not the least doubt that, if the British Government had been unhappy about the nature of the contract, it would not have allowed the Export Credits Guarantee Department to underwrite it." (*Boston Globe*, 2 November 1983.)

In addition to the building of the airport, other measures of infrastructural development were undertaken. Feeder roads were constructed and the attempt was made to diversify the economy and to find new markets for Grenada's agricultural products. Additionally, the society was trying to develop its man-power resources as fully as possible.

But it is at the political level of the society that we can begin to locate the present crisis. In the first place, despite its attempt to construct a socialist state, Grenada had arrived at what can be called *the national democratic stage* of its development. Primarily anti-imperialist in character, this stage of social development was characterized by three major aspects:

1. The determination to work itself out of the tremendous economic and technological backwardness of the society and to lay the basis for socialist construction. At this level, the building of the state sector and the control of the financial institutions of the society assumed much importance.
2. The stimulation of the private sector in order to boost production. The NJM argued that the low level of technology, the limited level of human resources and technical skills and the lack of capital made it imperative that they encourage some type of private enterprise.
3. The need to continue its anti-imperialist struggle and to disengage itself from the tentacles of capitalism.

They hoped to accomplish this through the

diversification of their trade ties, their support of such endeavours as the New World International Economic Order and their active participation in organisations such as the Non-Aligned Movement.

At this level of analysis, a description of the social classes within the society is important. It helps us to understand why the work of the Party and the work of the Government, as an apparatus which served all of the people, were different and why the desire to build the Party remained a very important priority within the context of the construction of a socialist state.

### DELINEATION OF CLASS STRUCTURE

At least, to the Marxists within the Party, the role of the Party remained of paramount importance. One suspects that for people such as Coard who was an early Marxist and Lt. Austin who was trained in Cuba, this question assumed much importance.

At any rate, it is only an understanding of this matter (the relationship between the Party and the State) and the delineation of the class structure within the society that begins to give us a feel for the depth of the crisis which was emerging within the island.

First, there was the bourgeois or landholding class which was not entirely destroyed with the revolution. Next, there was a professional strata from which came most of the leadership of the revolution. Then there was the urban and rural workers and the small and medium farmers. Next there were the middle strata of teachers and civil servants and other such persons.

In spite of the revolution, Grenada was not a homogeneous society. It possessed different classes and strata, each of which had its own specific interest. Building a society and developing a party, though taking place at the same time, involved



separate and distinct processes which had to be tackled with equal vigor and given almost the same attention.

The dynamics of each still had to be worked out as the revolution proceeded. It was the resolution of this problem which lay at the heart of the present crisis of Grenada, that is, up until the time before Bishop was killed. The actual unravelling of this central dilemma seems to have been in the making for some time. The evidence suggest the following:

1. About a year ago, the conflict between the role of the Party and the State arose once more within the Central Committee of the NJM. We must keep in mind that these separate relationships were identified as early as the inception of the NJM in 1974.

Also, it seems as though a part of the leadership of the NJM which was led by Mr. Bishop felt that there ought to be a new Constitution based on the contemporary needs of Grenada while another part of the leadership, led by Mr. Coard felt that the new Constitution ought to be simply a modification of the NJM Constitution.

Part of the problem, and this is only speculation, seem to be that Mr. Bishop began to feel that the army was gaining much too much control and needed to be toned down. Also, he might have felt that he ought to have been given more power within the party since he was certainly becoming the leading figure in the movement.

To most people, Bishop represented the Grenada revolution. Clearly, the Party's Constitution called for a one-man, one-vote rule and this must have been unsettling to Mr. Bishop. At any rate, the fact that most of the accounts which came out of Grenada after Mr. Bishop's death and the commencement of the United States invasion seemed to suggest that elections would have been held fairly quickly, based on the NJM Constitution, gave some sort of credence to this position.

2. On September 14, just prior to Bishop's departure (with a number of his ministers, most of whom were executed with him) to Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the Central Committee of the Party (by a vote of 9 to 1 and three abstentions) voted to reinstate the principles of the original NJM Constitution which left the Party and its development in the hands of Mr. Coard and the leadership of the State to Mr. Bishop. Additionally, Mr Coard was asked to deal with economic matters.

Speaking about the major proposal of this meeting, Mr. Donald Mc Phail, first Secretary of the Grenada Embassy in Cuba, commented: "The most outstanding proposal was that of joint leadership - this was going to be shared by Bernard Coard and Maurice Bishop, to marry the talents of the two.

Maurice had always been good in the international world and very popular with the masses, while Coard was very strong in the economic aspects of the revolution." (*New York Times*, 30 October 1983).

It would seem from the decision of this meeting that the State would have to act in accordance with the dictates of the Party and this is what caused the crisis. Quite clearly, Mr. Bishop would have been subordinated to Mr. Coard (even though this wouldn't necessarily have been so) since in fact it was believed or perceived that Mr. Coard controlled the Central Committee.

At any rate, Bishop asked for and received some time to consider the implications of this resolution even though the vote of the Central Committee was binding.

Before leaving for Czechoslovakia and Hungary on 28 September Mr. Bishop is reported to have supported the resolution of the Central Committee. On his return on 8 October 1983 Mr. Bishop changed his mind and refused to support the resolution. Such a violation of the principles of the Party was frowned



upon and Bishop was placed under house arrest.

Further, either Bishop or someone close to him began to spread the rumour that someone was trying to kill him. At the time of his arrest, this charge was being investigated. A *New York Times* report of 30 October suggested that Mr. Bishop himself had started the rumour and when he was confronted by the Party argued that his violation of the Party's resolution resulted from "his petit-bourgeois weakness."

3. Some clarifications are necessary at this point. First, there was no coup against Bishop at the time his arrest. Mr. Bishop was out of the country on so many occasions that if the military needed they could have seized power when he was out of the country.

Second, until Bishop was freed from house arrest by the crowd, the matter was essentially an internal matter of the Party. The mistake which the Central Committee made was not taking the matter to the people when it arose in the first place.

Third, if all which has been said is true, the role of Bishop needs to be analyzed much more carefully since, it could be argued, that he felt that he was bigger than the party and, with the support of the masses, could have violated the principles of the Party with impunity.

4. In spite of all of the problems, Mr. Bishop was asked by the Central Committee to resume his position as Prime Minister on 18 October. He said that he would consider the offer and addressed the people. On 19 October, a crowd led by Mr. Whiteman, broke into Mr. Bishop's residence and released him.

According to the Central Committee Mr. Bishop led the crowd to Fort Rupert and began to give out arms to the crowd. Despite attempts to reason with Mr. Bishop and his followers, unrest and disorder continued.

In the shooting which ensued two soldiers were killed. Again, according to the Central Committee: "They [Mr. Bishop and his men] declared their

intention to arrest and wipe out the Central Committee and senior members of the party and the entire leadership of the armed forces. At that point, the revolutionary armed forces sent a company of soldiers to reestablish control at Fort Rupert. In the ensuing struggle, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Whiteman and others were killed by the army.

After, this point every thing becomes confused and confusing and many interpretations of the events are possible. The military may have felt that it had lost control of the situation; both Mr. Bishop, his followers and the military may have been carried away by their rhetoric; the military may have feared the consequences if Bishop had won over the elements of the military and turned upon them and the Central Committee. There are innumerable possibilities.

Whatever the possibilities, the execution of so many brave and gallant men cannot be excused or talked away through revolutionary rhetoric. In this context, the statement of the Cuban government was instructive: "No doctrine, principle or proclaimed revolutionary position nor internal division can justify procedures as atrocious, as Bishop's physical elimination and the death of the group of outstanding honest and honorable leaders who were killed yesterday."

The Statement ended in the following manner: "Let us hope that these painful events may prompt all revolutionaries, in Grenada and the world over, to reflect sincerely; and that the concept shall prevail that no crime can be committed in the name of revolution and freedom."

Coming from the Cuban government, these words were of tremendous importance. Within their revolution they had to face a similar situation. What they did know is that one doesn't solve the problems of internal disagreement in such a savage manner and that it was particularly at that time of distrust and confusion that one needed much courage and



understanding to solve such a very difficult problem.

It is to be remembered that at the founding of the Communist Party in 1975 that Fidel Castro warned about the tendency to deify the leadership and the possibilities of the leaders to be overcome by conceit and other such vices. The principle needs to be reiterated: One does not solve the problem of fundamental, revolutionary disagreements with the gun.

From that moment, much of the sympathy and respect which the Grenadian revolution had won was in the process of dissipating. Those fair-weathered friends were ready to scuttle ship. Those persons and governments who had supported the revolution recognized the error which had been made in the process of social construction and called on the people of Grenada to work out their problems. The enemies of the revolution, however, had seen their opportunity and acted.

### OPPORTUNISM

Tom Adams, that most reactionary of all the Caribbean leaders, and his erstwhile companion, Ms. Eugenia Charles, saw their opportunity and made the most of them. They were against the Grenadian revolution from its inception. The Cuban warning about the desire of imperialism to use this crisis for their own benefits came to pass very quickly.

They cited all kinds of reasons for their invasion of that tiny Caribbean island but in the end they all seemed very frivolous. First, they cited the killings which had taken place in the island. That is, they referred to the seventeen deaths which had taken place at Fort Rupert. But to use those killings as a reason for invading that small country was the worst kind of opportunism.

For if the killing of innocent people were the criterion then the Seaga's regime was/is a better candidate for invasion. During the last elections in

Jamaica close to 700 persons were killed and thousands were wounded when members and supporters of Seaga's JLP (Jamaica Labour Party) and Michael Manley's PNP (People's National Party) began killing off each other. Eugenia Charles should have asked the U.S. to intervene then.

True, the United States government had attempted to destabilize the Jamaican government but of course it didn't quite work then.

The next reason offered by the United States and Caribbean leaders for the invasion was the inordinate fear which possessed the people of Grenada.

One U.S. official on ABC's *Nightline* said that the people of Grenada so feared for their lives that they were leaving the island by boat. If that was the case, why didn't the United States invade Haiti? We all know too much about the thousands of Haitian people who fled their islands by boat because they were afraid and are still afraid of Baby Doc.

Instead, the U.S. and the repressive regime of Baby Doc came up with a policy which forcibly interdicted any and all Haitians who left the country by boat and took them back to the island.

So the killings and the fear of which the Reagan administration spoke cannot be offered as a plausible or even consistently logical reason for the invasion.

The next reason which the Reagan administration offered is just as implausible. They argue that "law and order" had broken down and they had to move into the country to restore "democracy."

For the moment, one may forget the argument about the distinction between "bourgeois" and "socialist" democracy. One may wish to forget the fact that the Grenada government was trying to establish a socialist government. The question remains thus: "How do you 'impose' democracy on a country that you have invaded?"



Isn't there, inherent in the concept of bourgeois democracy, the notion of the sovereign will of the people, expressed through their political institutions, and acting for and on behalf of the people and their interest?

Given the untenable nature of all of the above reasons, it became necessary for the United States and her Caribbean allies to offer other explanations. They claimed that the US medical students were in danger of their lives that the possibility of another Iran hostage situation loomed very large and so they had to protect their citizens.

Thoughtful critics ask the following. Now that you have rescued your citizens why do you still remain in the island. The task of 're-imposing' law and order and a democracy become the response.

They also argued that the presence of Cuban and Soviet forces were turning Grenada into a "Soviet - Cuban" country for exporting revolution into the neighboring Caribbean territories. But now we are told that there are only 748 Cuban citizens in Grenada (just as the Cubans had said all along) and thirty Soviet citizens.

How so few persons were to perform such a mammoth task the U.S. cannot say. We only know that now the U.S. has added another country to the 122 countries in which she presently has forces and another 6,000 troops have been added to the over 500,000 troops that she now has in 123 countries.

It is to be noted that the US has more forces in more parts of the world than any other country or superpower in the world. Yet the propaganda about her peaceful intentions continue.

And then there are the principles which have been established by the United Nations and other international bodies. Article 53 (Chapter VIII) of the United Nations Charter specifically prohibits any unilateral action without the authorization of the Security Council. Article 17 of the Organization

of American States also prohibits the right of States or group of states to intervene or to occupy the territory of another state.

These prohibitions are explicit. Now it turns out that even the Treaty of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) which the U.S. and her Caribbean allies used to intervene in the Caribbean has not even been officially registered with the United Nations, according to Article 102 of the U.N. Charter and thus has no standing in international law. (*New York Times*, 2 November, 1982.)

And whether the Treaty of the OECS had any international standing or not, neither Jamaica, Barbados nor the U.S. are parties to that Treaty in the first instance.

More importantly, there can be no justification for the interference into the internal affairs of any state. The UN Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States give every country "the sovereign and inalienable right to choose its economic as well as political, social and cultural systems in accordance with the will of the people."

The people of Grenada began to carve out and to choose a socialist path. Such was their sacred right.

There can be no justification for the immoral acts of the U.S. and her Caribbean allies. Today all of the world stand appalled by the callousness and big-bully tactics of the USA and the recent vote in the UN proved it. There can be no basis for the U.S. or the Caribbean invasion of Grenada.

For those of us who support the right of sovereign peoples to decide their own destiny, the position is/must be clear:

\* The people of Grenada must control their own affairs.



\* We must support the revolutionary process of social construction which was started by the people of Grenada.

\* The U.S. and Caribbean troops should be called upon to leave Grenada immediately.

We ought not to overlook the connection between Grenada and the other Central American countries. The target may have been Nicaragua but the scenario did not quite emerge for them to intervene.

The actions of the U.S. in Grenada should not be separated from the militaristic and imperialist thrust of U.S. imperialism.

In the end the struggle of people, throughout the world for dignity and justice and the right to run their own affairs cannot be separated from the struggle against imperialist exploitation.

In whatever form, under whatever cover, the intent is the same: To deny the working people the right to enjoy the fruits of their own labour and the right to determine their own destiny.

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#### NOTE

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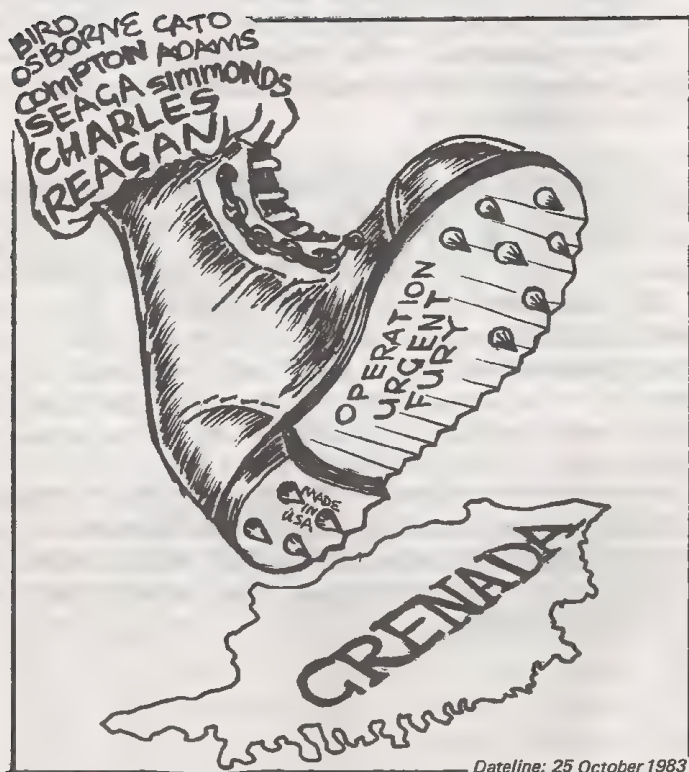
In reading this essay, Lincoln Myers, Managing Editor *Trinidad and Tobago Review*, questioned the role which this group of people played in the American War of Independence and their subsequent demands for inclusion of the Bill of Rights into the American Constitution. The pressing nature of essay (done within seven days of the United States invasion of Grenada) prevented me from elaborating upon the importance of this class and its importance in the Revolution. But the lower classes that is, the property less workers, the small artisans, and the poor farmers constituted the most important part of the revolution. Indeed, Alexander Fursenko argues that:

The main driving force of the revolution consisted precisely of these "lower classes" which were hostile to the

owners of property and the "gentlemen" holding administrative posts. Mass meetings, whose origin goes back to the communal gatherings, were a key form of political activity. Decisions more radical than any legislative motions were passed at these meetings. They were popular organs of law-making, in which non-propertied people and people denied suffrage took part. Alongside the "lower classes", an active part in the revolution was played by the "middle class" - farmers, businessmen, artisans, shopkeepers and lawyers. These owners of medium property comprised nearly two thirds of the white population. "The American and French Revolutions of the 18th Century," *Social Sciences*, Vol. VII, No. 3 (1976) p. 132.

In terms of the role of these same working people (that is, the 'lower classes') in the struggle to adopt the Bill of Rights, Fursenko writes: "The post-war period (until the adoption of the Constitution of 1787) was marked by an aggravation of class conflicts and attempts to deepen the revolution. This found expression in the equalitarian demands of the people in the armed actions, the most significant of which was the Shay's rebellion. One of the principal objectives of the Constitution was to put an end to the actions of this kind". (Ibid., pp. 136-7) Without a doubt, it was the action of the lower classes and the attempt to prevent the continuation of class conflicts which led to the adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. ▲





"there is no virtue in politics which can only know after the event."

C.L.R. James, *Party Politics in the West Indies*

## UNDERSTANDING THE GRENADA REVOLUTION

IN writing about the Russian revolution in his massive work, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, Leon Trotsky noted that "The history of a revolution, like every other history, ought first of all to tell what happened and how. That, however, is little enough. From the very telling it ought to become clear why it happened thus and not otherwise. Events can neither be regarded as a series of adventures, nor strung on the thread of some preconceived moral. They must obey their own laws. The discovery of these laws is the author's task." (p. 17)

The social and political situation which existed in Grenada from 1979, when the New Jewel Movement (NJM) came into power, to 1983 when they were forcibly removed by the United States and her Caribbean allies cannot be called a revolution even though there was the attempt at a certain amount of revolutionary transformation of the society. It was a coup d'etat which attempted to transform the society through coercion, persuasion and military decrees. As Fidel wrote to one of his comrades within the military: "The revolutionary thing is not the coup d'etat but the incorporation of the military into the



armed struggle." (Regis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?*, p. 85)

A revolution attempts to gain as much strength as possible from the populace and so becomes a people's struggle. As in the Cuban case, when the guerrilla force had obtained sufficient strength, it became the vanguard and was so recognized by the entire population. This is why Fidel Castro argued in 1957:

We are in no hurry whatsoever. We shall fight here for as long as necessary. Our fight will culminate in death or in victory for the *true* revolution. This word can already be spoken. Old fears are vanishing. The danger of a military regime diminishes because the organized strength of the people grows daily. If there is a coup or a junta, we shall from here demand the fulfilling of our last program. And if we continue this war, there is no junta that can last. (*Revolution in the Revolution?*, p. 85)

As we examine the performance of the NJM we can argue that it succeeded in part and failed in part. Necessarily, the successes and failures of the NJM tell us much about the limitations of the rigid interpretation of any ideological posture and the need to guard against excessive rhetoric and non-creative approaches to the problems of socialist transformation. We must understand what really transpired in Grenada if we wish to understand the political and social processes which were underway in that society.

It is the tendency of most Trinidadians (and I suspect most West Indians) to blame the "bloody thugs" and "murderers" like Austin and Coard for the events which led to the invasion and to elevate the activities of Maurice Bishop and others to sainthood. Lost in the shuffle is the solid attacks which the enemies of Grenada made against its leadership; attacks against which not even Bishop was exempt; attacks which have come fiercest from organs such as the *Trinidad Express* and the *Trinidad Guardian*.

One wonders how objective can they be under the present circumstances.

The revolutionary process in Grenada cannot be reduced to that of mere personalities, or to that of binary opposites. That is: Maurice was good and Coard/Austin was bad; Maurice was a 'soft-liner', Coard/Austin were hard-liners; Maurice wanted to move towards the US, Coard/Austin wanted to move towards the USSR.

Such personalizing of the process though one can argue that the process revolved around these personalities) does not help us understand better what political principles were involved and how they resulted in the final catastrophe.

### CENTRAL CONFLICT

From all of the evidence which we have received, it is very clear that the central conflict which transpired in that fatal month (mid-September through mid-October) was the attempt to re-define the role of the *Party* and its relationship to the *State* (government) in the construction of a socialist democracy. That is, what ought to be the role of the NJM, as the advanced consciousness of the society, and the state which must include and speak for the heterogeneous interests of all.

This distinction is crucial. In socialist societies or any other advanced society for that matter, the party which is thought to possess the most progressive elements of the society and sometimes the most vociferous ideologues of the society, assumes a great deal of importance and plays the most important role in leading the masses of the society. Additionally, in any party, there ought to be a "political" and a "theoretical" leader who need not be the same persons.

This distinction is important if we are to understand what transpired in Grenada. One, of course, cannot ignore the importance of "personalities"



in these conflicts but an understanding of *the process* must always be paramount in any analysis of the situation at hand.

An examination of political developments in Trinidad and Tobago at an important moment of its own development can be instructive.

In 1958, approximately three years after the colonial movement began in Trinidad and Tobago the identical problem arose in the People's National Movement (PNM). A Trinidadian Marxist, C.L.R. James, with an international reputation, was called back to Trinidad and Tobago from Ghana where he was working at the time, to participate in the struggle for political independence and, as he understood it, for socialism.

Shortly after he arrived conflicts analagous to the NJM situation arose. James in the end, was forced to resign from the Party and the editorship of the Party's organ *The Nation* some two years after his arrival. In his book, *Party Politics in the West Indies*, James outlined his position. The principal issues over which he offered his resignation read as follows:

- 1.) That the Party leadership recognised that in spite of (or because of) the great political success of the Government, the organization of the Party has declined to a dangerously low level.
- ii.) That the Party leadership, after a period of investigation, call a convention to discuss and take measures on the improvement of the Party as an Organization."

These were only two of the reasons why James left the Party.

Yet, it was very clear that James saw the Party (that is the PNM) as degenerating and felt that particularly because of its success at the polls (and consequently, its success as the government), the Party was declining.

There was need to separate the Party from the State (that is, the government) and to build the Party organization. As he said at the time: "The theoretical foundations of PNM were well laid. But no human being can at the same time run a government and direct the organization of a party. A *Party* leader has constantly to ask himself: if I were struck down tomorrow (or shot down) what will happen to my programme? The answer is not in individuals but in a solidly organised party." (pp. 52-54)

James arrived in Trinidad in June 1958. Three months after he arrived he submitted his plans and proposals for the Party to Eric Williams, Political Leader of the PNM. On 17 October 1958 Eric Williams addressed the Third Annual Convention of the People's National Movement. The theme of his address was: *Perspectives for Our Party*.

Recognizing that the formation of the Party had been stymied because of its need to form a national government only nine months after its formation, Eric Williams declared: "For two years and nine months the Party has had to play a subordinate role; subordinate to the Movement, subordinate to Government. Party organisation, machinery, and planning have had to take a back seat, inevitably so, whilst the driver's seat was given over to the organisation of the Government, to the machinery of development, to the planning of the material foundations of a healthy society." (*PNM Major Party Documents*, Vol. 1, pp. 138-9)

Given the relative (and, as he pointed out,) the necessary neglect of the Party, Eric Williams had to clarify for the members of the Party the decisive role of the Party in contemporary politics. He explained: "The distinctive feature of 20th century politics is the increasing role of the Party, either in active support of the Government or in actually taking over the Government. On the revolutionary side we have had the Bolshevik Party; on the counter-



revolutionary side we have had the Facist Party; in the former colonial countries we have had the Congress Party of India and the Convention People's Party of Ghana. This is due to the fact that, with the increasing complexity of Government on the one hand, and the need of the masses to participate in the organisation of their own affairs on the other, the only possible way has been to organise the party that it lives a political life of its own." (p. 139)

This is Eric Williams on the need for the development of an independent Party. His conception of the role of the mass party which is taken directly from James is indubitably a Trotskyist position.

In *Party Politics in the West Indies*, James had argued as follows: "In an underdeveloped country, particularly in the West Indies, only the mass popular democratic party can be the centre of the instinctive movement and need to fill the vacuum. If we do not produce new conceptions, organizations, etc., the old ones remain in bastard form, creating confusion and disorder."

## NEW REGIME

In the preface to *The History of the Russian Revolution* Trotsky argues that: "The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historic events. In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business — kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new regime." (p. 17)

Eric Williams's conception, as well as that of

C.L.R. James, at that moment in the history of Trinidad and Tobago, was the supreme need to involve the masses of people in the construction of a new and different society through the building of "the mass popular democratic party." Williams, like James, recognized the distinction which needed to be made between the *Party* and the *State* in the construction of a socialist state.

Just as important, and of equal significance, was the distinction which needs to be made between the "political" leader and the "theoretical" leader. In the Grenada context, it was called the question of "joint-leadership" and Maurice Bishop, as a Marxist and socialist, could not plead ignorance to this very simple though necessary distinction.

Eric Williams in his *Perspectives for Our Party* outlined the issue. First, he argued: "In the Bolshevik Party where sheer ideas were of infinitely greater importance than they are in a democratic party such as the PNM, the role of Lenin was above all that of theoretical guide and source of inspiration. To print columns of a speech in the Legislature or of a statement at a Press Conference and then to forget it as is repeatedly done by the journalists, the educationists and the others, is a source of graveness to the Party." (145)

Next, Williams went on to define the distinction between the political leader and the theoretical leader. Defining the political leader as "the main source of its ideals and its political and social attitudes," Williams went on to define the role of the theoretical leader as the "source of inspiration, ideas and facts and research for journalists, orators and the innumerable other individuals and groups [in the Party] who transmit their ideas to the public" (p. 149)

Continuing, Williams outlined what has to be the central distinction between the political and theor-



etical leader and the manner in which they function (and have functioned) even in the American Revolution: "Political leader and theoretical leader *need not necessarily be one and the same person*. They may be two or three persons. History is full of such *a natural collaboration of talents* [important words in the Grenada context.]

George Washington from the beginning to the end was the leader of the American Revolution. He was soldier and after soldier, political leader and organiser of the new state. Yet the fact remains that the educator of the people in the stage of transition and afterwards was Jefferson and almost on the same level, Alexander Hamilton, Madison and others in their paper, *THE FEDERALIST*." (pp. 149-50)

At this moment of our history, Williams was at his theoretical best. The forward momentum of the colonial movement had thrust him to heights which he would never reach again. James, indisputably, contributed to Williams' clarity of thought and precision of analysis.

Like Grenada, the break came as these two tendencies fought for dominance. In the case of Trinidad and Tobago James resigned from the Party and *The Nation* and went back to England. In Grenada's case the "masses" rescued Bishop and went to Fort Rupert. The results, as we now know, were quite different.

Yet, we can conclude, using the Trinidad and Tobago example, that as a society attempts to go from the national democratic to the socialist phase of development the role of the party and its relationship with the state (or government) arises in vivid contrast. And, as in the Trinidad and Tobago case, the role of ideologues, ideologies and the popular leader does seem to come into conflict.

But the conflict cannot be reduced simply to that of personality. It has to deal with the direction in which the party and subsequently the state

must go. James put it in a rather succinct manner in *Party Politics in the West Indies*: "Democracy like charity begins at home. A backward party cannot lead a forward people. With independence the arena is cleared for a new stage of political action. If the movement of the Party from one stage to another is rough and involves conflict, public discussions, acrimony and even splits, that is the nature of things, a law of political life which none can escape. The pains of birth and rebirth are the conditions of progress, even of mere existence." (p. 10)

The critical issue remains one does not solve such a problem with the force of arms. Trinidad was spared that conflict. Grenada was not as fortunate.

### THE ROLE OF BISHOP IN THE CRISIS

Given this conflict in the stages of transformation, any serious revolutionary or progressive thinker must attempt to examine the role of Maurice Bishop in the conflict. Not necessarily or only to place blame but to begin to demystify the role of sainthood which has begun to gather around his name.

Most of us who observed the Grenada revolutionary process do have a certain amount of respect for Maurice Bishop, perhaps more than any of the other leaders of the "revolution" because we only knew Bishop. We cannot deduce therefrom that Bishop was the "only" leader of the revolution.

Also, it cannot be stressed too strongly that what Maurice Bishop and the NJM fought against was the destruction of "one-manism" (that is, the tendency of one-man leadership) that has been the bane of Caribbean politics.

We only have to recall the horror which has been associated with the names of Somoza, Trujillo, Papa and Baby Doc, Eric Gairy, Forbes Burnham to be frightened anew by its sinister spectre. One-



manism on the Right cannot be replaced by one-manism on the Left.

And so the struggle in Grenada, as it ought correctly to have been, was a struggle for real and genuine democracy where the deliberations of thirteen men were always to be preferred to that of one.

Whether we liked it or not, the Central Committee which ruled Grenada voted that the nature of its leadership should be shared. Someone who claims to have been an insider of the NJM gave a rather accurate report to the *Trinidad Express* (18 Nov. 1983) of what transpired during those fateful days. However, he makes the same mistakes of analysis which some other commentators have made.

In spite of his own evidence to the contrary, he lays the blame of the difference between the Party and State on the "ambition" of Bernard Coard. For the purposes of clarity, I reproduce part of the interview:

**EXPRESS:** It has been said that Coard wanted to steer Grenada closer relations with the Soviet bloc than Bishop. Is this true?

**Answer:** I don't think there was any fundamental difference between Maurice and Bernard in the way relations should have been built with the Socialist countries. In fact, Maurice made far more trips to the Socialist countries than Coard. . . and I would say that relations of cooperation were progressing under Maurice's leadership.

**EXPRESS:** So what was the cause of the split then?

**Answer:** I think that the basic cause of the problem lay in Bernard Coard's ambition. It was an ambition that was very strong over the years to really be the leader of the party, if not necessarily the leader of the government, then certainly the leader of the party, to formally exercise more power than he was exercising.

Now when I say formally exercise more power, let us be clear. Bernard Coard exercised a tremendous amount of power, in the party even before this issue of joint leadership came up. And on most cases that had to do with party building, with the training of party cadres and the ideological work within the party and so on. In most

cases, Maurice would defer to Bernard. So he had defacto power within the party. . . a lot of power and influence within the party.

But I think what he desired most of all was that this de facto power be formalised, and he be recognized as THE LEADER of the party. Now in our situation, the party was paramount over the state. The party in effect ran the state. If he became leader of the party then, maybe not in name, but certainly in practice he would be leader of the revolution.

This is something Maurice could not accept. Maurice having co-founded the party in 1972 with Unison Whiteman. Bernard at the time wasn't in Grenada, Bernard was a lecturer here in Trinidad. Maurice had no problems accepting the co-leadership proposal in principle. He said that to the party. That was his last speech given to the party. But he had difficulties in conceptualizing how this joint leadership arrangement was going to work in practice, and as far as he was concerned, the way it was being proposed, the divisions of responsibilities and tasks was going to work out in a way that was not going to be an equal sharing of power.

It wasn't going to be co-leadership in the strict sense. It was going to be a guise under which Bernard Coard was going to be the number one in the party. It would have (been) tantamount to the office of the Prime Minister being ineffectual, powerless, and being reduced to the kind of ceremonial position that the Governor General exercised during the four and a half years of the revolution. (p. 41)

How are we to accept this interpretation of the evidence? We certainly can't conclude that because Bishop was no longer the head of the Party that in fact his status would be that of the Governor General.

Bishop still represented the embodiment of the revolution even though, as the Central Committee had insisted, his leadership reflected certain weaknesses. How indeed, are we to accept the above position when Bishop himself had argued: 'When the revolution speaks, it must be heard, listened to. Whatever the revolution decrees, it must be obeyed; when the revolution commands, it must be carried out; when



the revolution talks, no parasite must bark in their corner." Was this mere revolutionary zeal or worthless revolutionary rhetoric?

And the revolution had indeed spoken, through its leaders. The minutes of the Central Party of 10 September 1983 voted to reiterate the position which it had taken one year earlier and which is reproduced in its October 1982 Plenary. It stated the following:

In the October 1982 plenary meeting which considered the matter of Comrade Bernard's [Coard] resignation, the C.C. levelled criticism at itself, criticised the weak functioning of the C.C. and P.B. and the weak chairmanship and leadership of Comrade Maurice Bishop. The C.C. plenary at the time stated 'The Party stood at the Crossroads. Two routes are open to the Party. The first route is the petty-bourgeois route which would seek to make Cde. Bernard's resignation the issue. This would only lead to temporary relief, but will surely lead to the deterioration of the party into a Social Democratic party and hence the degeneration of the revolution. This road will be an easy one to follow, given the objectively based backwardness and petty-bourgeois nature of the society. 'The second route is the communist route. The route of the Leninist standards and functioning. The Central Committee reaffirmed the position taken by the general meeting of September 12th and 13th. The party must be put on a Leninist footing." (*The New York Times*, November 7, 1983, P. A16)

One may wish to ask whether the NJM were too overcome or overburned by the strict rigidity of the Leninist position and whether it was modified sufficiently to suit the specific conditions of Grenada. Certainly, after the Vietnamese and Cuban wars of national liberation, the role of the Party vis-a-vis its military component and vis-a-vis its relationship to the general populace needed greater theoretical clarification. After all, Grenada with its relatively homogeneous population does not represent the same degree of heterogeneity as the Soviet society.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, by its

very name, represents a vast diversity of peoples, languages and cultures. Consisting of approximately one sixth of the globe with some 22.4 million square kilometers, the USSR has a population of approximately 260 million persons, about 100 different peoples and nationalities and speak 108 different languages and dialects, 48 of which had no written language before the October revolution of 1917.

## PARTY LINE

In the context, the insistence of the inviolability of the party's line, its rigidity and inflexibility under most circumstances are understandable if not necessarily acceptable. The dominance and the rigidity of the party can be seen as necessary if there is to be any coherence of and for the society at all given times.

Grenada, on the other hand, is a small society where everybody knows everybody else; where all the people speak the same language, have been subjected, more or less, to the same conditions of slavery, colonialism and imperialist exploitation.

And while I do not rule out the class divisions of the society and its varied interests, the ruling classes of the Grenada society were not as solidly entrenched in the society as was the Russian Zsar prior to the October Revolution.

The insistence on the guiding role of the party, yes. Its rigidity and turgidly imported line remains a questionable proposition.

In the context, the leaders of the Grenadian revolutionary process may have been more overcome by what has been called the "false and opportunistic problematic": that is, the question of office-holding, titles and one's position within the internal structure of the revolution. It is undoubtedly true that people who had worked together in carrying the revolutionary process forward should have been more concern-



ed about the *content* of the revolution rather than with its *internal formal minifestation*.

Who eventually became the Political Leader and who remained the Theoretical Leader should have been less important than the construction of a revolutionary, socialist society. These problems of the party, notwithstanding, should not have led Mr. Bishop to disregard the position taken by the Central Committee. In so doing, he exposed a certain petty-bourgeois and colonial tendency: the desire always to be "the main man."

Another aspect of the crisis revolves around Mr. Bishop, who, accompanied by Mr. Whiteman, declared "no compromise, no negotiations."

According to the Central Committee:

"They [Mr. Bishop and his men] declared their intention to arrest and to wipe out the entire Central Committee and senior members of the party and the entire leadership of the armed forces. At that point the revolutionary armed forces sent a company of soldiers to re-establish control at Fort Rupert."

Mr. Bishop and his group fired on the soldiers, killing Sgt. Dorset Peters and Warrant Officer Raphael Mason and wounded several others. The armed forces then stormed the fort. . . and Mr Bishop, Mr Whiteman and others wer killed." *The New York Times*, October 30, 1983, p. 20)

*The Grenadian Voice* in its special issue on the crisis (the first number since it was closed down by the NJM) seems to corroborate most of the above. Since they would not want to support the statement of the NJM, we reproduced their account of the fateful day:

Wednesday October 19th; Unison Whiteman goes to the work places asking people to close their businesses and register publicly their protest over the Prime Minister's situations. [sic.] Led by Whiteman, Vincent Noel and other organisers, a crowd estimated at 25,000 [that would be a quarter of the country] proceeded to Mt. Royal to free Bishop. Among the crowd were thousands

of school children, Bishop's supporters and curiosity seekers. At Mt. Royal, PRA soldiers fired warning shots but the massive crowd pushed the two gates aside and released the Prime Minister. Noel and Whiteman then led the people to the Market Square so that Bishop could address them. A section of the crowd however went with Bishop to Fort Rupert for which purposes is still unclear.

Sometime shortly after 1.00 p.m. Norris Bain was in the Market Square assuring people that the Prime Minister would address them. The three armoured cars arrived at the Fort Rupert from Fort Frederick and started firing into the crowd.

People screamed, with terror as they were shot, crushed and smashed by the armoured cars and many automatic rifles were firing. (November 20, 1983)

The only discrepancy in these two reports above has to do with the manner in which Bishop was killed. It is the common consensus that Bishop and others were executed. Yet the question remains: Why did Bishop go to the fort?

A *Trinidad Guardian* report of November 22 suggest that "minutes" after Bishop was released by the crowd he contacted the Cubans to assist him to be restored to power which he felt, and certainly at that point, he had lost. The Army apparently had moved its headquartes from Fort Rupert to Fort Frederick, during the time of Mr. Bishop's house arrest. According to Mr. Bishop's aide who released this story to the *Trinidad Guardian*:

We were faced with the problem of not having enough weapons to arm the masses, because the AKs (automatic rifles) we had were given to a group of comrades to capture the Telephone Company, so that Maurice could get a message to the outside world as to what was happening in the country." the former aide said.

It was while these comrades were on their way to the Telephone Company, and the Prime Minister and the others were in the room discussing their next move, since there were no weapons at the fort, that the soldiers



attacked the fort shooting into the crowd." (p. 5)

Quite clearly Mr. Bishop meant to arm his followers to attack the members of the Central Committee and all of the other "disloyal" ones who had taken way "his leadership. " At that point, the struggle was no longer a *collective* and *organized* affair; it had degenerated into a *personal squabble* in which the only central principle was Mr. Bishop's leadership. That is, from the point of view of Mr. Bishop.

What results from all of these accounts is the great opportunism of Mr. Bishop who attempted to use his popularity to forstall and to over-reach the decision of the Party's Central Committee. The Central Committee may have been incorrect in its decision; it had a right to be wrong. Together, they should have worked out their problems. And indeed, Mr. Bishop may have precipitated a situation which he, in his grave, would never have contemplated, let alone agree with. His mother is correct when she says that Maurice would not have wanted the U.S. to interfere in the internal affairs of Grenada even though the interference of the Cubans would have been just as objectionably.

In the end, we cannot be too hard on Brother Bishop. He acted, perhaps, as he thought fit. Regis Debray has written that: "In a given historic situation there may be a thousand ways to speak of the revolution, but there must be one necessary concordance among all those who have resolved to make it." (*Revolution in the Revolution ?* . . . p. 126) Grenada, even in its aborted revolutionary situation, has given the word to all of us who are committed truly to the transformation of the Caribbean: one necessary concordance for the continued socialist struggle in the Caribbean. ▲



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